

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A chassis for an electronic device, comprising:
a plurality of exterior walls joined to each other to form a partially-assembled chassis, wherein at least a portion of one exterior wall is vacated; and
a plurality of interchangeable access panels each adapted to be removably attached to the partially-assembled chassis so as to occupy at least a portion of the exterior wall vacancy, wherein each such access panel has a unique configuration of one or more apertures each providing operational access to components housed in the chassis,
whereby a completely-assembled chassis is attained by removably attaching any of the plurality of interchangeable access panels to the partially-assembled chassis.
2. The chassis of claim 1, further comprising:
an interlocking system comprising at least one interlocking mechanism operably positioned at one or more locations in one or more of the partially-assembled chassis and each of the plurality of interchangeable access panels, wherein each interlocking mechanism is adapted to detachably secure at least a portion of a selected interchangeable access panel to the partially-assembled chassis.
3. The chassis of claim 1, wherein each of the configurations of one or more operational access apertures comprises one or more of the group comprising:
at least one port aperture;
at least one expansion slot aperture;
at least one power supply aperture; and
at least one ventilation apertures.
4. The chassis of claim 1, wherein the electronic device is a server.
5. The chassis of claim 1, wherein the electronic device is a personal computer.

6. A plurality of interchangeable access panels, wherein each access panel is adapted to be removably attached to a partially-assembled chassis to occupy at least a portion of a vacant portion of an exterior wall, and wherein each access panel comprises a configuration of at least one aperture each constructed and arranged to provide operational access to components mounted in the chassis.

7. The access panels of claim 6, wherein each access panel further comprises:
an interlocking system comprising at least one interlocking mechanism operably positioned at one or more locations in either or both the partially-assembled chassis and each of the plurality of interchangeable access panels, wherein each interlocking mechanism is adapted to detachably secure a portion of a selected interchangeable access panel to the partially-assembled chassis.

8. The access panels of claim 6, wherein the vacant portion of an exterior wall comprises an entire exterior wall.

9. The access panels of claim 6, wherein each configuration of at least one operational access aperture comprises a combination of one or more characteristics of aperture size, dimensions, quantity, orientation, relative position, location, and type of supported operational access.

10. The access panels of claim 6, wherein the configuration of one or more operational access apertures of at least one of the interchangeable each access panels comprises:
at least one port aperture.

11. The access panels of claim 6, wherein the configuration of one or more operational access apertures of at least one of the interchangeable each access panels comprises:
at least one expansion slot aperture.

12. The access panels of claim 6, wherein the configuration of one or more operational access apertures of at least one of the interchangeable each access panels comprises:
at least one power supply aperture.

13. The access panels of claim 6, wherein the configuration of one or more operational

access apertures of at least one of the interchangeable each access panels comprises:
at least one ventilation aperture.

14. The access panels of claim 6, wherein the electronic device is a server.
15. The access panels of claim 6, wherein the electronic device is a personal computer.
16. A method of assembling a chassis for housing an electronic device comprising:
providing a partially-assembled chassis having at least a portion of one exterior wall vacated;
selecting a first interchangeable access panel from a plurality of interchangeable access panels each comprising a configuration of at least one aperture that provides operational access to the chassis; and
removably attaching the first interchangeable access panel to the partially-assembled chassis to occupy at least a portion of the vacated exterior wall portion.
17. The method of claim 16, wherein providing a partially-assembled chassis comprises:
fixedly securing a plurality of exterior chassis walls to each other.
18. The method of claim 17, wherein providing a partially-assembled chassis further comprises:
removably securing at least one exterior chassis wall to one or more fixed exterior walls.
19. The method of claim 16, further comprising:
detaching the first interchangeable access panel from the chassis;
selecting a second interchangeable access panel from the plurality of interchangeable access panels; and
removably attaching the second interchangeable access panel to the partially-assembled chassis to occupy at least a portion of the vacated exterior wall portion.

20. The method of claim 16, wherein removably attaching the first interchangeable access panel to the partially-assembled chassis comprises:

engaging interlocking portions of at least one interlocking mechanism operably positioned at one or more locations on at least one of the partially-assembled chassis and the first interchangeable access panel.

21. The method of claim 16, wherein the vacant portion of an exterior wall comprises an entire exterior wall.

22. The method of claim 16, wherein the configuration of one or more operational access apertures of at least one of the interchangeable each access panels comprises one or more of the group comprising:

at least one port aperture;
at least one expansion slot aperture;
at least one power supply aperture; and
at least one ventilation apertures.

23. The method of claim 16, wherein the electronic device is a server.

24. The method of claim 16, wherein the electronic device is a personal computer.

25. A method of assembling a chassis for housing an electronic device comprising:
means for providing a partially-assembled chassis having at least a portion of one exterior wall vacated;

means for selecting a first interchangeable access panel from a plurality of interchangeable access panels each comprising a configuration of at least one aperture that provides operational access to the chassis; and

means for removably attaching the first interchangeable access panel to the partially-assembled chassis to occupy at least a portion of the vacated exterior wall portion.